

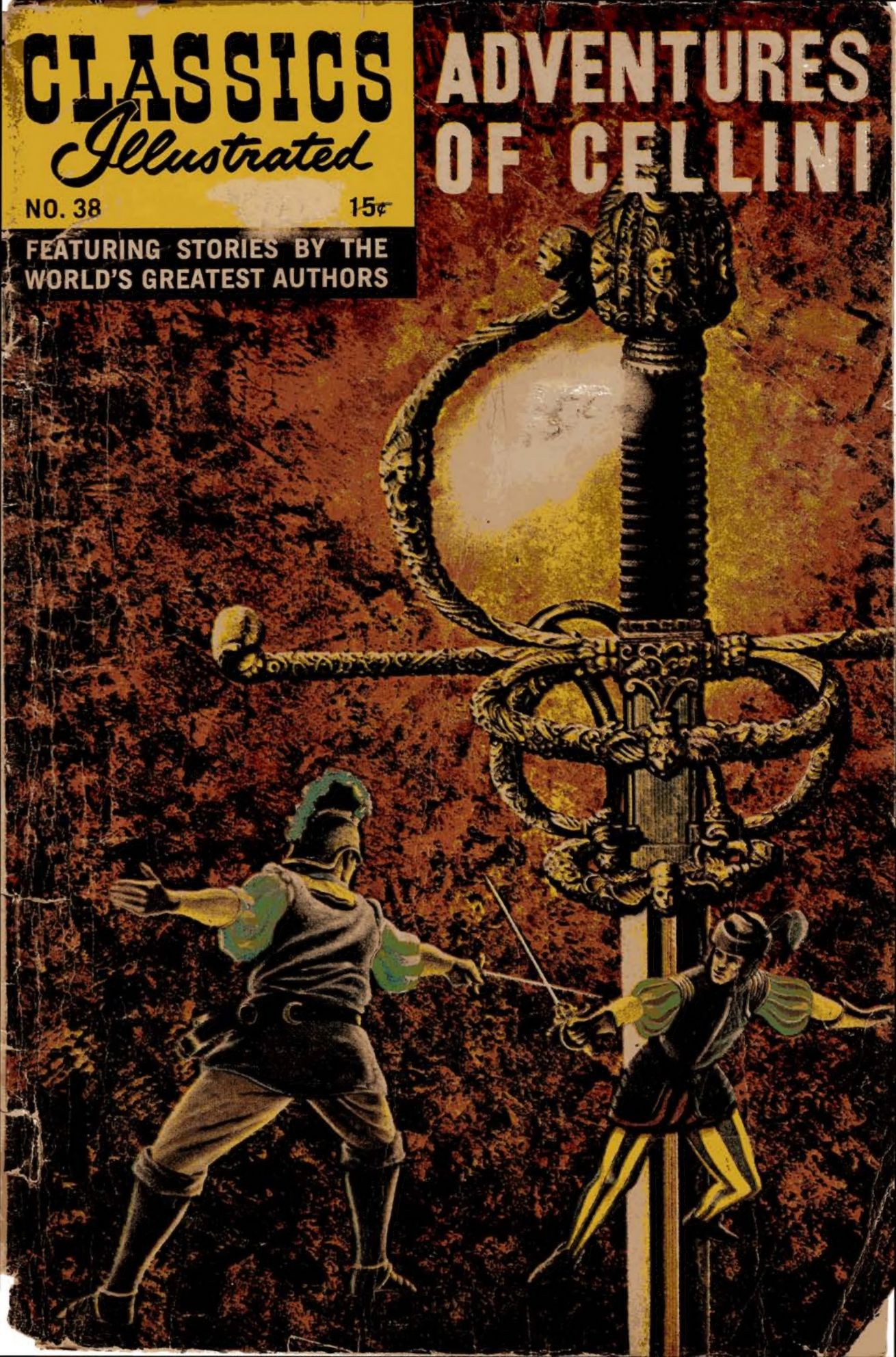
CLASSICS *Illustrated*

NO. 38

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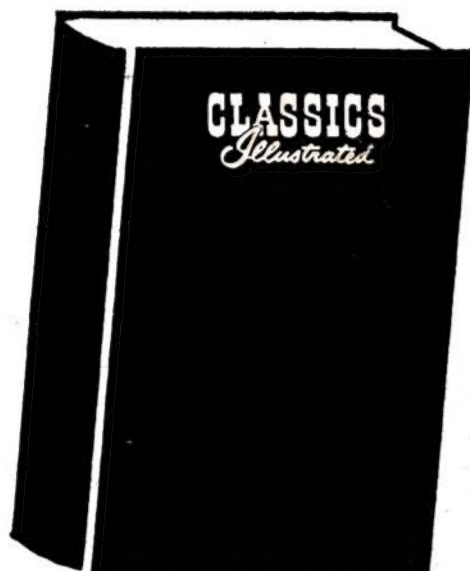
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ADVENTURES OF CELLINI

(The Life of Benvenuto Cellini)



All men of whatsoever quality they be, who have done anything of excellence, ought to describe their life with their own hand. This duty occurs to my own mind, now that I am fifty-eight years old and am in Florence, the city of my birth.

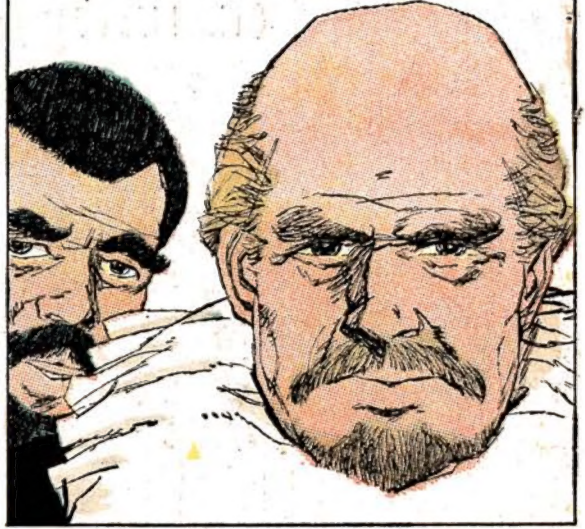
I was born to Elisabetta and Giovanni Cellini in the year 1500. The midwife presented me to my father.

Lord, I thank Thee with my whole heart. This gift is very dear to me; let him be welcome.

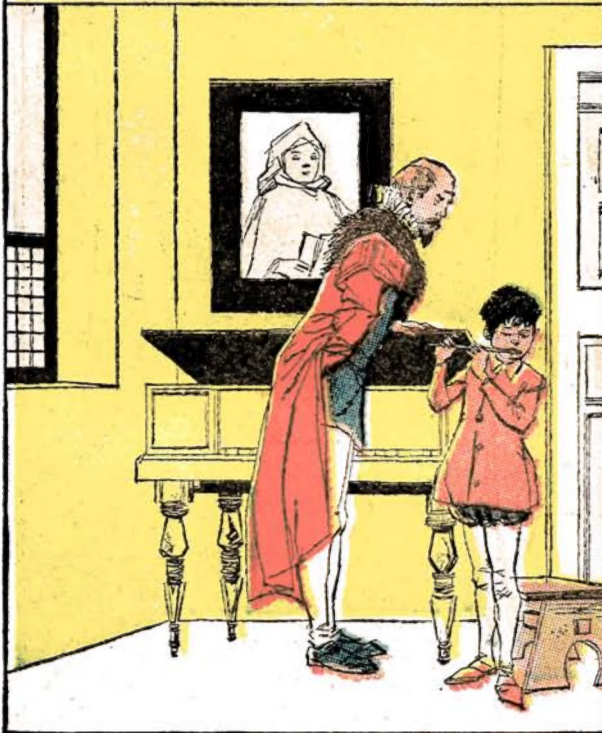


What name shall he bear?

Let him be welcome-- Benvenuto.

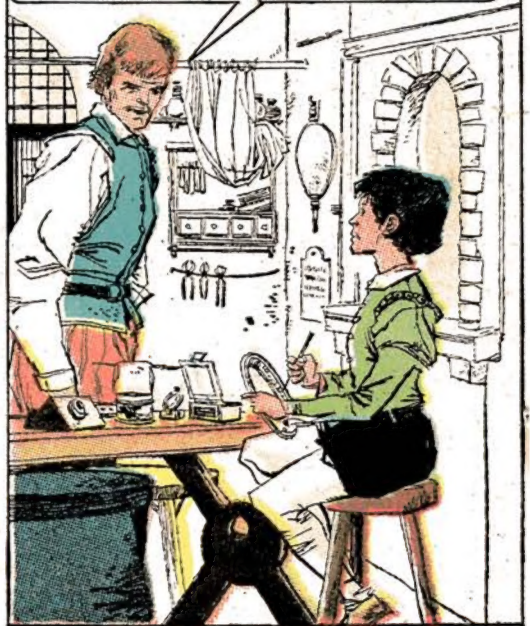


My father began teaching me to play upon the flute at a tender age. I had an inexpressible dislike for it and played only to obey him.



When I reached the age of fifteen, I put myself, against my father's will, to the goldsmith's trade. My master took marvelous delight in my performances.

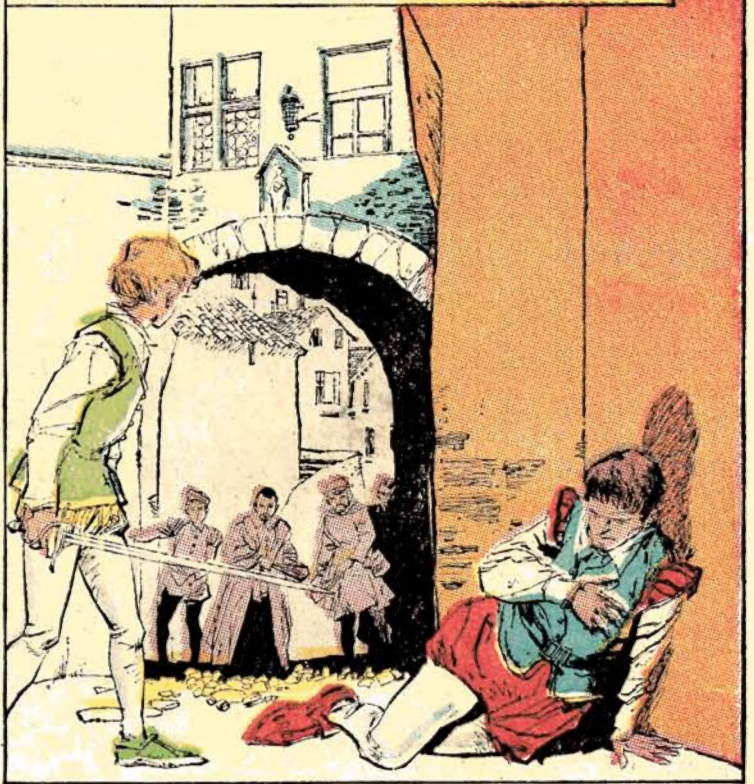
In a few months, you have caught up to the best young craftsmen in our business.



One evening at this time, my brother, who was about fourteen, came to a duel with a young fellow of twenty.



My brother had badly wounded the fellow when some of his kinsfolk put hand to their slings.



Make off, you have done enough!



A stone hit my poor brother in the head.



He fell to the ground in a dead faint. I ran up at once, seized his sword and stood in front of him, bearing the brunt of several rapiers and a shower of stones.

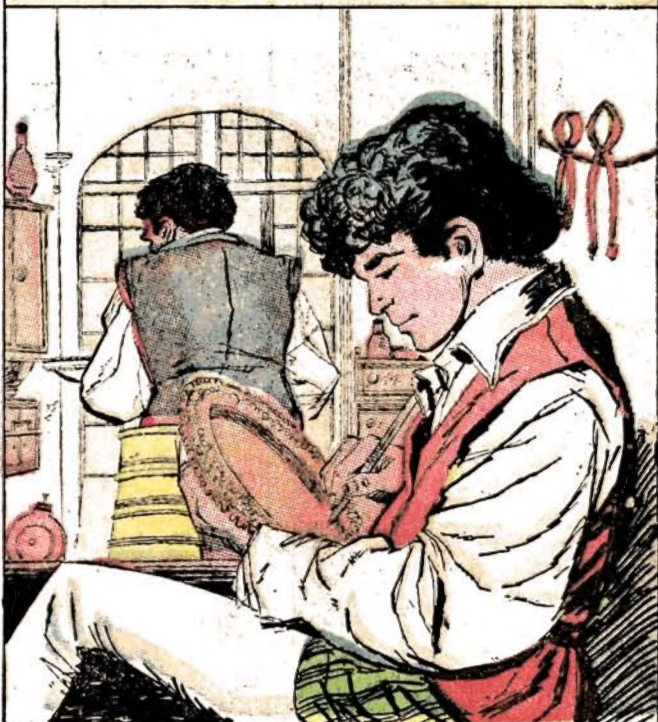


I never left his side until some brave soldiers came and rescued me from the raging crowd.

What valor in one so young!



I carried my brother home. When he was cured, the magistrates of the city sent us into exile for six months. We went to Siena, where I worked at the goldsmith's trade.



The Cardinal de' Medici had us recalled at the entreaty of my father. I was once more required to spend many hours playing the flute.

I shall yet make you a marvelous musician.

Your Benvenuto will get much more honor and profit if he devotes himself to the goldsmith's trade.



These words made my father angry, but seeing that I, too, had the same opinion, he finally gave in.

Very well, be a goldsmith. But for my sake, promise sometimes to play upon your flute.

I will do so.



One day, my brother took some of my handsome clothes that I had bought out of my own savings. When I found I had been cheated, I took the miserable remnants of my clothes and money and left the city.



When I came to Pisa, I stopped at the shop of a goldsmith, who at once gave me work to do.

Your good appearance makes me believe you are a decent, honest youth.



I made great progress in the one year I stayed there and completed several fine and valuable things. My father, meanwhile, kept writing piteous entreaties that I should return to him, which I finally did.

What a blessing it will be once again to hear you play the flute.



I continued my art work in Florence, and spent much time studying the masterpieces of the divine Michelangelo.

This is the school of the world.



One day when I was nineteen,
a friend came up to me.

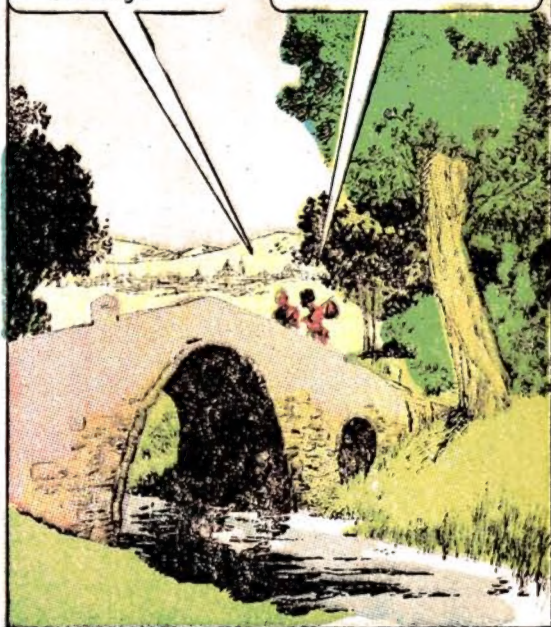
I have come to anger with my mother.
If you are willing to go to Rome, I
will be glad to join you.



Being angry with my father at the time for
the same old reason of the music, I agreed.
We pursued our way together.

What will our old
folks say this
evening?

Let us not think about
them until we have
reached Rome.



When we got to Rome, I put
myself under a master and
earned a good deal of money.
After two years, upon my
father's entreaty, I returned
to Florence. There I came to
know some worthy men among
the goldsmiths, but I also met
others who robbed me grossly.

They practice thieveries under
the cloak of kindness.



This coming to their ears,
they threatened to make
me sorely repent of such
words, but I paid them
little heed. One day, as I
was leaning against the
shop of one of these men...

You have been speaking
ill of us.



I would not, had you done
your duty by me. You ought
to complain of yourselves,
not of me.



While I was standing there, one of them lay in wait till a beast of burden went by with a load of bricks. When it reached me, he pushed it so violently on my body that I was very much hurt.



Turning round and seeing him laughing, I struck him such a blow that he fell down like one dead.



When the others wanted to make a move upon me, I laid hands to a little knife I had.

If one of you comes out of the shop, let the others run for the confessor, because the doctor will have nothing to do here.



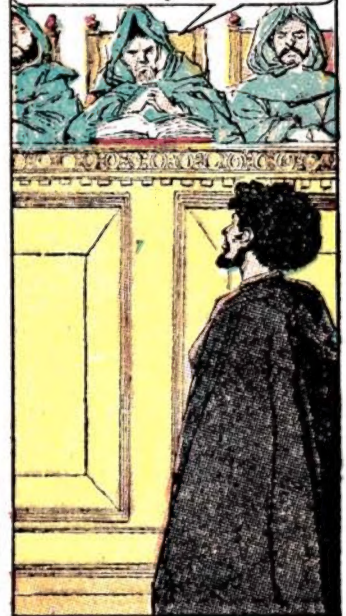
Not one stirred. As soon as I had gone, however, they ran to the magistrates.

Benvenuto Cellini assaulted us in our shops with a sword, a thing which has never yet been seen in Florence.



The magistrates had me summoned. They began to upbraid and cry out upon me.

You will pay four measures of flour to be given as alms to the nunnery of the Murate.



My rage grew. I left the place, ran to my shop, seized a dagger and rushed to the house of my enemies.



The one who had been the cause of the quarrel flung himself upon me.



I stabbed him in the breast, piercing doublet and jerkin without, however, grazing his flesh.

Traitors, this day I mean to murder you all.



I ran storming down the staircase and found all the rest of the household. I flung four or five to the earth, the others giving it to me with hammers, cudgels and an anvil.



Inasmuch as God does sometimes mercifully intervene, He so ordered that neither they nor I did any harm to one another. I ran away, and when they searched among themselves, they saw that not a single man was injured.



In an hour, the magistrates caused a dreadful ban to be published against me. I escaped from the city disguised as a friar and went to Rome. There, I worked in a goldsmith's shop and met a young man named Lucagnolo who was a more skillful craftsman than any I had met.

You should execute large plate, as I do.



These jobs of setting jewels are more profitable. They are not commissioned every day.

Wait and see. I shall get more from my vase than you will from your ornament.



We bent our heads in grim earnest to the work. After ten days, each of us had finished his undertaking with great delicacy and artistic skill. We delivered our works and returned to the shop.

Come and compare the price of your jewel with the price of my plate.



He poured his money on the counter. There were twenty-five silver crowns. Then I lifted my packet with both hands and emptied it like a mill hopper.

Lucagnolo, Benvenuto's pieces, being all gold and twice as many as yours, make a far finer effect.



I thought that, what with jealousy and shame, Lucagnolo would have fallen dead on the spot.

I will thenceforth give up plate and give my whole attention to your gewgaws.



I soon opened a shop of my own and executed many pieces of work for a great variety of men. In 1527, our emperor, Charles V, was at war with France. The French army had arrived before the walls of Rome, and I was asked to guard the Castle Sant' Angelo with fifty men.

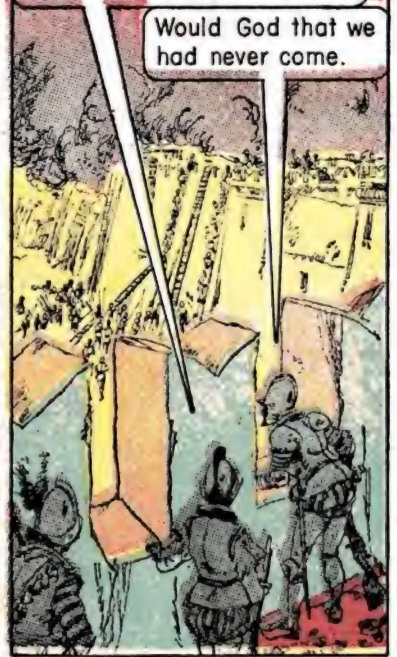
Let us go out to reconnoiter.



When we reached the walls of the city, we found the battle raging desperately

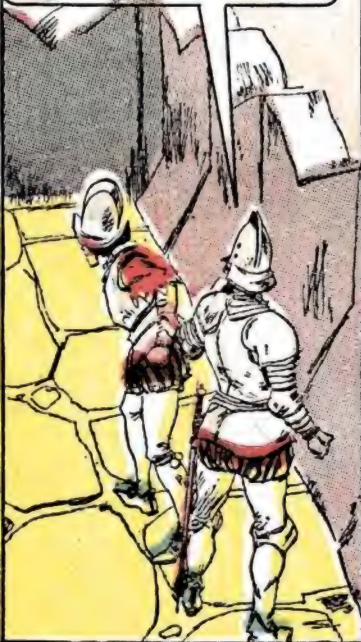
There is nothing to be done here. The enemy is mounting, and our men are in flight.

Would God that we had never come.



He turned in maddest haste to fly, but I took him up somewhat sharply.

Since you have brought me here, I must perform some action worthy of a man.



I directed my arquebus at the thickest troop of fighting men and had my companions fire also.



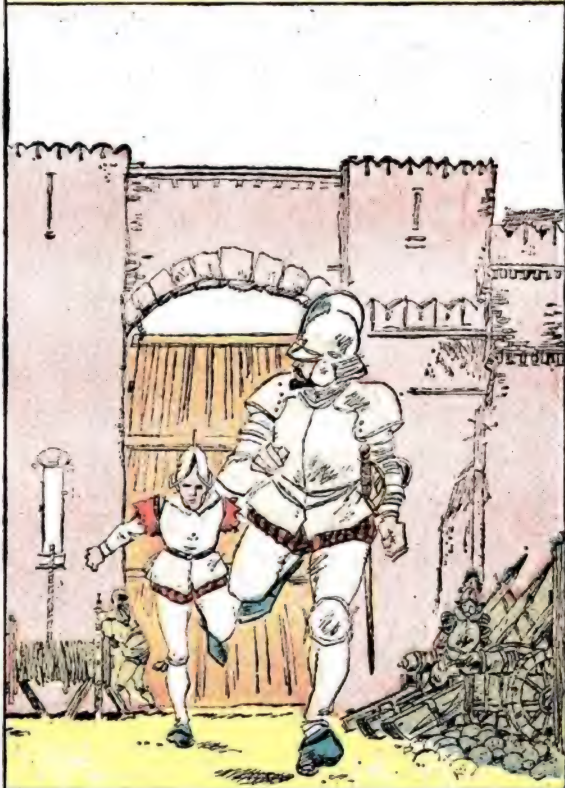
When we had fired two rounds apiece, I crept cautiously up to the wall, and observed among the enemy an extraordinary confusion. One of our shots had killed their leader.



Quitting our position on the ramparts, we returned to the great gate of the castle with the foe at our rear.



The governor of the castle ordered the iron portcullis to be lowered just as we got inside.



I ascended to the keep and attached myself to certain pieces of artillery. I aimed some swivels and falconets at points where I saw they would be useful, and and killed a good number of the enemy.



One day I was struck in the chest by a cannon-shot carrying a piece of the battlement...



...and was stretched upon the ground like a dead man.

Alas, we have lost the best defender we had.



I recovered, however, and returned to the rage and fury of my guns. I pursued my work there with such ability that I acquired great credit with Pope Clement, who was in the castle. One day he called me to him.

If we are defeated, I want to be able to get these jewels out of the castle.



Take all of the gems out of their gold settings. We will sew them into the linings of my clothes. The gold I should like you to melt down as secretly as you are able.



I went up to my room and built a little furnace of bricks, with a dish at the bottom of it to catch the melted gold. While it was working, I kept firing my guns, occasioning all sorts of mischief in the trenches.



Making a good calculation, I hit a man who turned out to be the Prince of Orange.



A few days afterward, the articles of peace were signed.

Benvenuto, I wish to make you captain of the company.

First I want to go to Florence and redeem the ban against me there.



I went to Florence. Shortly thereafter, Pope Clement declared war upon that city. I received orders to serve in the Florentine militia fighting against the Pope. One day, several fellows were in my shop when a letter from Rome was put into my hands.



What's in the letter, Benvenuto?

Nothing of any interest.



Presently, I got another letter. The Pope required that I come at once and said that I ought not stand against him. This letter put me in such a fright that I went to a dear friend.

I cannot explain to you what is on my mind, but take these keys and close up my shop and my house. In a few days, you shall hear where I am.



Upon my arrival in Rome, I found several of my former friends, by whom I was very well received.



I presented myself to the Pope, who was exceedingly glad to see me.

I would like to employ you on a piece of the greatest consequence. It is a button for my priest's cope. Upon this I want you to represent God the Father in half-relief, and in the middle to set a magnificent diamond.



I set myself to work constructing a model, and in the trade of goldsmiths it roused considerable jealousy among those who thought they were capable of matching it. One, a jeweler named Pompeo, was in favor with the Pope.

Does your Holiness really think Benvenuto Cellini is up to doing work of such extraordinary import?

I shall see his model. If I find him unfit for the purpose, I shall look around and find one who is fit.



It happens I have several designs ready.

I will take that into consideration after I have seen Benvenuto's model.



After a few days, I finished my model and took it to the Pope. Pompeo was there with his drawings, but the Pope refused to approve them. Then he asked to see my model.

If you had been in my own body, you could not have done it better.



I labored diligently on the piece with such good fortune that it was held to be the finest masterpiece which had ever been seen in Rome. The Pope then commissioned me to make a chalice, but he failed to advance me the money I needed.

Go on with the work.

I will finish it if you pay me the money.



I made a bow and went off in a fury.

This devil Benvenuto will not brook rebuke. It is not right to be so haughty with a pope.



The Pope sent word to me to complete the chalice.

I desire to do so, but his Holiness must give me an advance and some gold.



On hearing my answer, the Pope flew into a passion. More than two months passed. Then he sent Pompeo to me.

The Pope does not mean you to finish the chalice, but wants to have it back.

The piece is mine, and with it, I shall do what I think best.



After the lapse of three days, there came to me two chamberlains of his Holiness.

The Pope commands now that either you give up the piece, or we take you to prison.

Take me as your prisoner.



They did so, and brought me to the governor of Rome.

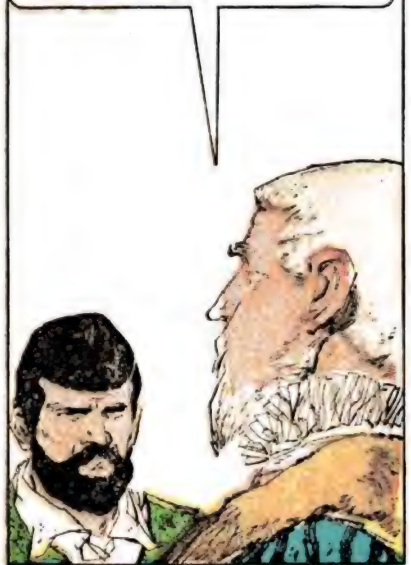
Benvenuto, you are going to make me treat you as you deserve. Send for the work at once.

You will get nothing from me.



The governor went to the Pope. No sooner had he returned, than he sent for me.

The Pope says you must bring your work to me. I will seal it in a box and take it to him, and he will return it untouched. He wants this done in order to preserve his own honor.



Accordingly, I had my piece sealed up and carried to the Pope, who took off the seals and opened the box.

Tell Benvenuto that popes have authority to bind and loose things of far greater consequence than this.



He paid it prolonged attention.

Tell him I will allow him all the conveniences he wants in order to complete it, provided only that he goes on working.



The jeweler Pompeo brought the message to me.

The greatest treasure I can wish for is to regain the favor of so great a pope, lost to me by no fault of mine.



Pompeo related everything to the Pope, and thus the matter rested. Then, one day, I became involved in a quarrel and struck a man with a lump of mud. There was a stone in it, and he fell stunned as a dead man.



Pompeo was passing by. He quickly ran to the Pope.

Most blessed Father, Benvenuto has murdered a man. I saw it with my own eyes.



This put the Pope in a fury.

Take him and hang him at once. Do not appear before me until you have hanged him.



I made haste to escape from Rome. When I reached Ponte Sisto, I found the whole guard there, both horse and foot.



I put my horse boldly to a trot, and with God's grace, passed freely through.



I went to Naples. But soon I received a letter from Cardinal de' Medici asking me to return to Rome. I did so and thanked him warmly for my recall.

I have ordered the chief constable not to touch you. But refrain from going about for four or five days.



I heard that the man whom I had wounded recovered, and the Pope had calmed his temper and was asking for me. One day, I took some medals I had made and went to see him. He recognized at once their mastery of art.

Ancient kings never had such medals made for them as these.



You very nearly wronged yourself by cutting off a servant such as I am. I humbly beg you another time not to let yourself be so easily stirred to rage against me.



He began again to speak about the medals and commissioned me to another.

Go, Benvenuto, you will not have finished it before I have provided for your future.



After I had taken leave...

I will give Benvenuto enough to live on wealthily without the need of laboring for anyone but me.



Shortly thereafter, Pope Clement was taken ill and died. I was sitting in the street with several of my friends to look at the great commotion which always happens on such occasions, when Pompeo went by attended by ten men, very well armed.



He stopped and laughed derisively in my direction. His fellows also laughed and wagged their heads.

Let us fight them.

I am quite able to conduct my quarrels to an end by myself.



My enemies proceeded slowly down the street. I followed quickly and, breaking the line of Pompeo's men, laid my hands on him so quickly and coolly that none of them were able to prevent me.



I gave him two blows, and he fell stone dead.

I did not mean to kill him, but knocks are not dealt by measure.



I drew my sword to defend my life, but Pompeo's men looked at the corpse and took no action against me.



Cardinal de' Medici heard of the affair and again protected me, as did Cardinal Cornaro, another churchman who favored me. A few days afterward, a new pope was elected, Paul III.

Send for Benvenuto Cellini. I do not wish anyone else to strike my coins.

He is hiding for the murder of one Pompeo of Milan.



I know nothing of Pompeo's death, but plenty of Benvenuto's provocation, so let a safe-conduct be at once made out for him.

In the first days of your papacy it is not well to grant pardons of this kind.

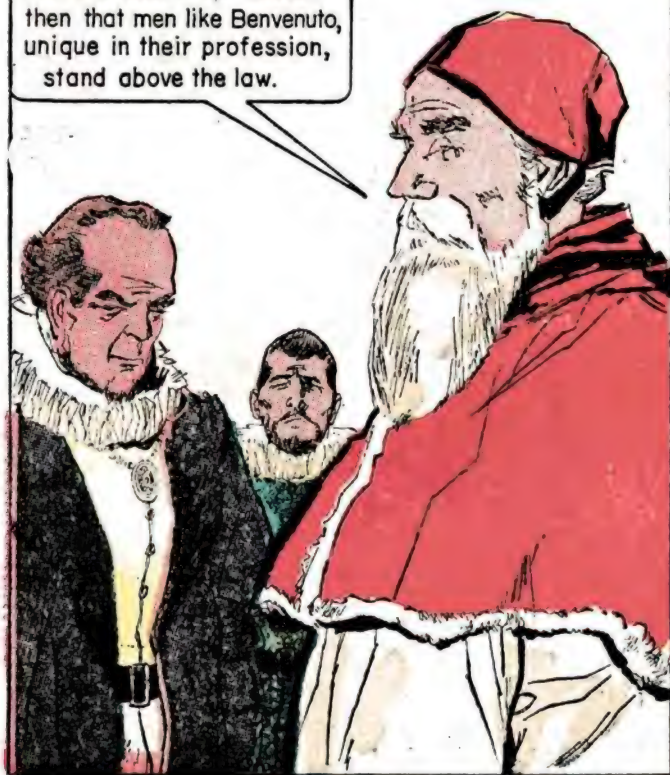


You know less about such matters than I do. Know then that men like Benvenuto, unique in their profession, stand above the law.

So I began at once to serve him and was treated with utmost favor. But my enemies hired men to kill me.

I have discovered that you are to be taken this very evening.

Benvenuto, be off at once.



I left for Florence, where Duke Alessandro pressed me to remain in his service. I made several dies for his coinage. Then, one day, I received from Rome a full safe-conduct from the Pope.

He wants me to obtain pardon for my homicide at Our Lady's feast, where it is usual every year to grant freedom to twelve outlaws.



I set out for Rome and, upon arriving there, went to bed. An hour before daybreak, I heard a furious knocking at the door. I called to my servant.

See who the madman is that knocks so brutally at this hour of the night.



While he was gone, I made haste to pass an excellent coat of mail over my shirt. Then...

Heavens, master! It is the chief constable and all his guard!



Tell them I am putting my clothes on and will come out to them.



I ran to the back window, which looked out on gardens, and there I saw more than thirty constables.



I seized a dagger with my right hand, and with the left I took the safe-conduct. Then I had the door opened.



Arrest him! I will look to the safe-conduct later.



I presented my arms boldly.

Either I shall escape or be taken a corpse!



The chief constable saw he would not be able to have me except in the way I said.

Read the safe-conduct, then.



The safe-conduct was read. At last they gave up, threw it on the ground, and went away without their prize.



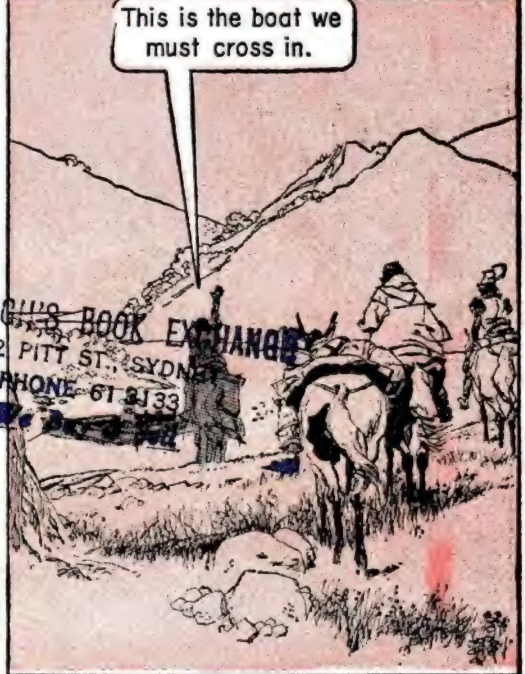
Four days later, I walked in the procession at the feast of Our Lady, received my pardon, and so got clear at last. I made various things for the Pope, but, being paid badly, I made up my mind to leave Rome without permission.

I will go to France and seek a better fortune.



Taking two apprentices with me, I set out over the mountain passes. At the utmost hazard of our lives, we succeeded in surmounting two Alpine ridges. We came to a lake.

This is the boat we must cross in.



It is surely dangerous to embark in this craft with four horses.

Perhaps these waters do not drown folks as they do in Italy.



We started out and, after we had gone about four miles, it began to storm upon the lake.

You must help us in rowing.



We did so.

Land us on the farther shore.

We cannot. There are shoals there.



Just at that moment, a great wave broke over the boat.

Mercy, save me!



If we go down, take your horse's bridle and turn his face toward the fresh grass yonder.



When we had reached the middle of the lake, we found a little bit of level ground where we could land. On our wishing to disembark, we discovered that the boatmen would hear nothing of it.

Draw your swords and force these fellows to put us ashore.



When at last we got to land, we had to climb a mountain for two miles.



One of the horses, carrying all my money and other valuables, made a false step and went on scrambling backward.

Let the horse go. Save your own life.



At length, we reached the top. We traveled onward and finally reached Paris, where I sought an audience with the King.

His Majesty is just setting out for Lyons on a campaign.



I followed the court and entered into close relations with the Cardinal of Ferrara. At Lyons...

You should abide here until the King returns.



However, I was ill, and one of my lads had taken a fever. Furthermore, the French and their court had grown irksome to me.

Let us return to Rome. I would rather die there than in France.



So, when we were able, we set our faces toward Rome, traveling in the company of some Frenchmen. One day, we came to a broad and deep river, spanned by a narrow bridge.

The bridge is dangerous. Dismount and lead your horses.



In this way, I got across with one of the Frenchmen.



The other Frenchman lagged behind, jeering at us.

You are a man of poor spirit, Monsieur Cellini. There is no danger whatsoever.



He urged his horse forward. The animal slipped, and both horse and rider plunged together into a deep, wide pool close to a huge rock.



I set off running, scrambled onto the rock, seized the back of the Frenchman's gown, and pulled him up.



He had drunk his bellyful of water, and was within an ace of being drowned.

I congratulate you that I was the means of rescuing your life.



We pursued our journey to Rome. There, I accepted commissions from several noblemen. While I was engaged thus, a letter arrived from the Cardinal of Ferrara.

His Majesty asks me to return to France and promises to pay me well.



But before I could leave, the constables met me in the street one morning.

You are the Pope's prisoner.



You have mistaken your man.

No, you are the artist Benvenuto, and I have to take you to the Castle Sant' Angelo.



Upon that, four of his officers rushed on me.

Not a man shall touch him. But see that he does not escape.



They took me straightway to the castle and locked me in an upper chamber.

This is the first time I have ever smelled a prison.



After having been eight whole days in prison, I was summoned before three examiners. They began to question me.

My lords, it is more than half an hour since you have been pestering me with questions and chattering and prattling. Therefore, I beg you to tell me what it really is you want of me.



This angered them.

You talk far too arrogantly. Let me tell you that I will bring your pride down lower than a spaniel.



We know for certain that you were in Rome at the time this unhappy city was sacked, and that you were in this castle.



Now since you are a goldsmith, Pope Clement called you and made you unset all the jewels of his tiaras, miters, and rings. Then he ordered you to sew them into his clothes.



While thus engaged, you set apart a portion of them to the value of eighty thousand crowns. This has been told us by one of your workmen. Now you must find the jewels or their value in money; after that we will release you.

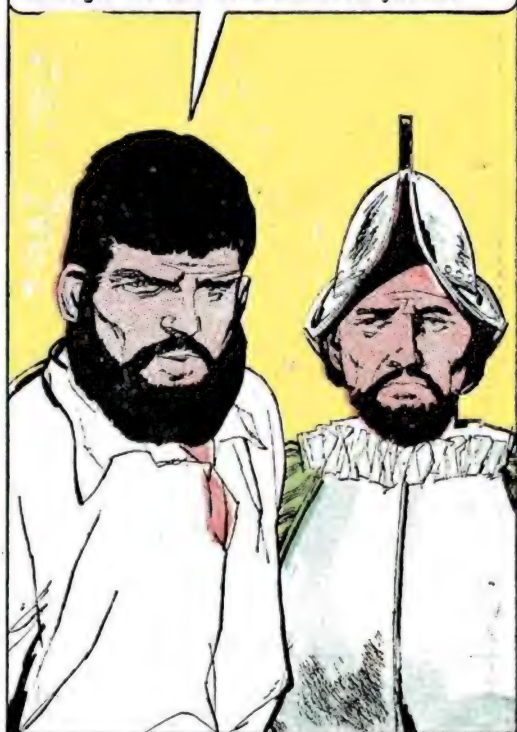


When I heard these words, I could not hold from bursting into a roar of laughter.

Thanks be to God that I should not be imprisoned for some folly, as the wont is with young men.



But was it not your business, before you took me up, to inspect the record of jewels which has been carefully inscribed through the last five hundred years?



I tell you the registers are perfectly in order; you will not find missing a single article of value which belonged to Pope Clement that has not been minutely noted.



After you have done this, you may blush at your leisure for having done such cruel injustice to a man like me, who has performed so many honorable services for the apostolic chair.



The examiners listened in astonishment, then left me to report to the Pope. He had the records of the jewels diligently searched.

Your Holiness, no jewels are missing.



They left me in the castle, however. To end the affair, they set about to contrive my death.

They do not mean to let me go.
I must use my wits a little.



I began to have new sheets of a coarse fabric brought to me.

Sir, where are the
used sheets?

I gave them to some
of the poor soldiers
in the castle.



*But instead, I cut them in strips
and hid them in my mattress.*

I will need enough to clear the
great height of the central keep
of the castle.



*One day, I took a pair of
pincers from a carpenter
in the castle and began
to try the nails which kept
the hinges of my door in
place.*

I can pull some of them
out and substitute nail
heads made of wax.



*On the evening of a certain
feast day, I made up my
mind to escape. I removed
the hinges with the greatest
toil...*



... and, shouldering the strips of linen, I went forth.



I scaled the roof...



... and attached one end of my linen roll to a piece of tile.

Lord God, give aid to
my good cause.



Then I let myself go gently, by degrees, supporting myself with the sinews of my arms.



*When I stood upon my feet,
I went gladly away.*

I am free!



*But I discovered another wall had been
built in front of the first, the space between
being used for a stable.*

*The door is barred with
thick iron bolts. I am
in a trap.*



*I stumbled on a long pole, suc-
ceeded in placing it against the
wall, and then swarmed up it
by the force of my arms.*



*I clambered down the
other side by hanging on
to a strip of linen which
I had tied to the pole.*



*I was quite exhausted and
was compelled to rest awhile.
Then I advanced quickly
toward the last rampart.*

*I will descend this lesser
height as I did the greater.*



But on this descent I fell, struck my head, and lay stunned for more than an hour and a half.



Little by little, my faculties returned, and I became aware of the wound on my head.

It is an injury of no consequence.



When I wanted to stand up, I discovered that my right leg was broken.



I bound it up as well as I could and crawled on all fours to the city gate, which was shut.

Perhaps I can move this stone and crawl underneath the door.



I did this and crept into town. But some mastiff dogs set upon me.



I wounded one of them so sharply that he howled aloud, and all the others ran after him.



Now dawn had risen and I felt myself in danger. I chanced to meet a water carrier.

Ho, there. I beg you to carry me to the steps of San Piero. I will give you a crown of gold.



He took me up at once and carried me there. I resumed my march, making for a house where many of my friends were tarrying.



While I was crawling up the steps, a servant of Cardinal Cornaro recognized me and ran to his master.

Most reverend Monsignor, your friend Benvenuto is down there crawling on all fours.

Run and carry him upon your back to my room.



When I arrived, the cardinal sent for a physician, who set my leg.

Be under no apprehension. I will go now and beg the Pope to release you.



When he got to the castle, he met with Cardinal Pucci. They both threw themselves on their knees before the Pope.

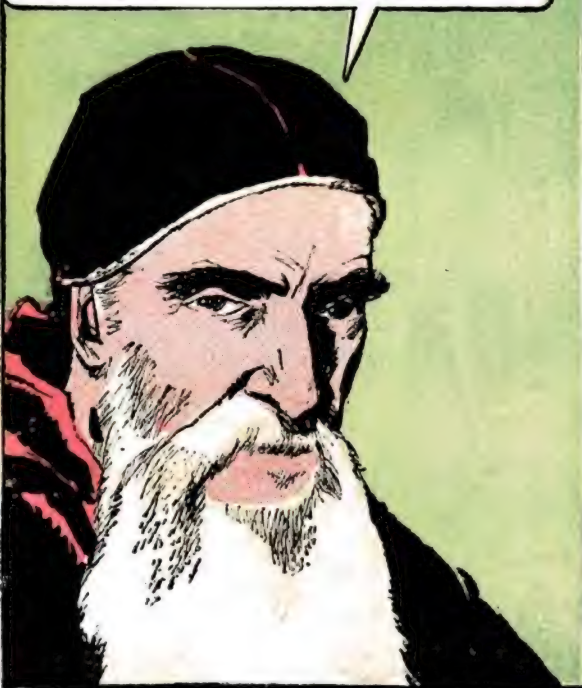
We beg you to give us Benvenuto. Surely his great talents entitle him to exceptional treatment. Moreover, he has displayed such audacity that his exploit might seem superhuman.



I have kept him in prison at the request of some of my people, since he is a little too violent in his behavior.



But, recognizing his talents, we had intended to treat him well so that he should have no reason to return to France. Tell him to mind his health, and when he is recovered, we will make it up to him for all his troubles.



But after the cardinals had left, Signor Pier Luigi spoke against me.

That Benvenuto has by far too bold a spirit. It might even come into his head, imagining that he had been wrongly imprisoned, to fire upon your Holiness. He killed Pompeo in the midst of ten men who were guarding him.



Two days afterward, Cardinal Cornaro went to beg a bishopric from the Pope for a gentleman of his.

You want the bishopric; I want Benvenuto. Let us make a trade.



But what will the world say of you or me?

Let the world say what it chooses.



The Pope had me lodged in a ground-floor chamber of his private garden. Here, I was allowed to have visitors.

They say in Rome that the Pope has bestowed on you an office with an income of five hundred crowns.

He is only studying secretly how he may best destroy me.



That very night, the chief constable came into my room.

Strap Benvenuto on this chair and carry him to the place you know of.



They bore me to the prison Torre di Nona and put me in the condemned cell. I was left upon a wretched mattress, violently agitated in my soul.

Why does God think fit to try me so? This is a cell for prisoners who have their throats cut.



On the next night, the constables brought me to the castle from which I had escaped. I was shut up in a dungeon which swam with water and was full of big spiders and worms.



Thus I continued to exist in misery, spending most of the day in darkness upon a rotten mattress.



Finally, I became adapted to this purgatory and resolved to put up with all the discomforts.

I shall sing and pray and write.



After many weeks, the Cardinal of Ferrara arrived in Rome from France. He went to pay his respects to the Pope. They feasted together, and the cardinal raised his Holiness to a high pitch of merriment. Then...

His Majesty begs you to give him Benvenuto. He has the matter very much at heart.



The Pope was well disposed and ripe to grant favors.

This instant, you shall take him to your house.



He gave orders to this purpose, and I was removed from my prison and brought to the cardinal's palace. Several weeks later, we started for France. We found the King at Fontainebleau, and I presented him with a silver vase and basin I had made.

Of a truth, I hardly think the ancients can have seen a piece so beautiful as this.



Later, the Cardinal of Ferrara sent for me.

His Majesty wishes you to begin working. He will allow you three hundred crowns a year.

Had I known of three hundred crowns, I would not have come. I would not have stirred a foot for twice that sum.



Nevertheless, I thank you for all things, and take good leave of you. So long as I have life, I will pray God for you.



The cardinal was greatly irritated.

Go where you choose; it is impossible to help people against their will.



I set out on horseback for the most out-of-the-way place I could, but a messenger soon galloped up to me.

The King orders you to come to his presence immediately.



The King gave me a salary of seven hundred crowns, and I set up a workshop and got to work on a silver statue of Jupiter.

Do not exhaust yourself on manual labor. I wish to enjoy your services through many years to come.

The moment I leave off working, I shall fall ill.



The King then commissioned me to make a handsome salt-cellar. When I brought him the model...

This is a hundred times more divine than I had ever dreamed of. Execute it in gold.



I worked strenuously and made not only the salt-cellar but a great silver vase and two bronze heads. I then designed a fountain for his palace at Fontainebleau.

The central figure, Mars, is meant to stand fifty-four feet above the ground. The other figures embody those arts and sciences in which your Majesty takes pleasure.

Verily, I have found a man here after my own heart.



In the meantime, I brought my silver Jupiter to completion. I went with it to Fontainebleau.

Where shall I set it up?

In my gallery.



In the same gallery were models of the foremost masterpieces of antiquity.

This is like running the gauntlet; now may God assist me.



I placed the statue and arranged it as well as I was able. At length, the King arrived. My work was the first to take his eye.



This is by far the finest thing that has ever been seen. Benvenuto's performance does not merely rival, but surpasses the antique.

Meanwhile, his Majesty had other things than pleasure to attend to. Several months passed without my receiving money or commissions. At last, I presented myself and offered him two vases I had made.

I beg you to grant me the favor of permitting me to travel to Italy. The times are more for fighting than for making statues. I will leave the seven months' salary due me if you will just pay me for my return journey.



The King rose angrily.

Take these vases back to Paris, for I want to have them gilded.



He then departed. I went up to the Cardinal of Ferrara and besought him to procure leave for me.

Go back to Paris and wait there eight days. If you receive no letters, you may set off.



I obeyed. After the lapse of twenty days, I took my departure and went to Florence. Here, I paid my respects to Duke Cosimo.

If you feel inclined to execute something for me, I am ready to pay you far better than that King of yours has done.



I will erect a mighty statue for your piazza, to stand with Michelangelo's David and Donatello's Judith.

I should like a Perseus with Medusa under his feet.



I very gladly set myself to the task and, in a few weeks, finished my model. When the duke saw it, he extolled it to the skies.

If you could only execute this little model with the same perfection on a large scale!

I will execute it at least thrice as well in bronze.



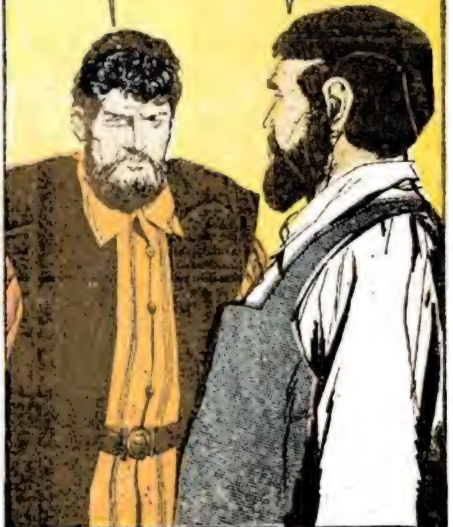
I began my great undertaking. I first made an iron skeleton, which I covered with clay. This I baked well. Then I spread wax on the surface.

I will take a hollow mold of the figure, withdraw the wax from it, and let the metal flow in the space where the wax was.



This figure cannot succeed in bronze. The laws of art do not admit it.

I have constructed the furnace on new principles. Owing to my intelligent insight, the statue will succeed.



I clothed the statue in clay and then began to draw the wax out through numerous air vents by means of a slow fire. I then constructed a funnel-shaped furnace and lowered the model into it.



I banked it with earth, introducing proper air-vents. Then I piled pigs of copper and bronze in the furnace and set it going.



It worked so well I was obliged to rush from side to side to keep it going. To increase my anxieties, the workshop took fire, while from the garden a storm of wind and rain kept blowing in.



Battling thus for several hours, I could bear up no longer, and a sudden fever attacked me.

I must go to my bed. Do your best, for the metal will soon be fused, and the sluices will carry the molten metal from the furnace into the mold to occupy the place where the wax was.



Thus, with despair, I left them and spent two hours battling with fever. Suddenly, something made me leap from my bed, and I strode toward the workshop. I beheld the men standing stupefied and downcast.



I went immediately to inspect the furnace and found the metal was all curdled, an accident which we call "being caked."

Cross the road and fetch a load of dry oak wood there.



As soon as the first armfuls arrived, I began to fill the grate beneath the furnace. The logs took fire, and now the cake of metal began to stir beneath that awful heat.



I then flung half a pig of pewter into the middle of the cake inside the furnace. By this means, and by stirring with pokers and rods, the curdled mass began to liquefy.



All of a sudden an explosion took place.



No one was hurt, however. When the din was over and the dazzling light extinguished, I discovered that the cap of the furnace had blown off and the bronze was bubbling over.



I allowed the molten metal to flow into the mold.

It is not flowing as rapidly as usual. Probably the fierce heat has consumed its base alloy.



I sent for all my pewter platters, porringers and dishes and had them cast into the furnace.



Thereupon, my bronze was in most perfect liquefaction, and my mold filled.

Hurrah!



After I had let my statue cool for two days, I began to uncover it and found it had come out admirably.



Much later, I made some small bronze figures which were to be wrought into the pedestal of the statue. Both the duke and the duchess praised them highly.

I would not like to let those exquisite figures be wasted on the pedestal, where they would run the risk of being injured. I would rather have you fix them in one of my apartments.



I opposed this plan, but she was determined. Therefore, the next day, when the duchess was out, I had the figures carried down and soldered into their proper niches in the statue.



Oh, how angry she was! Now at last I brought the whole work to completion and exposed it to the public gaze. Immediately there assembled a multitude of people. All contended which should praise it most.



The duke was proud and happy.

My Benvenuto, you have satisfied and delighted me. I promise that I will reward you in such a way as will astonish you.



The reward fell far short of my expectations, but I have continued in the service of the duke here in Florence, my own birthplace, a town famous as the school of every art and science.



THE END

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BENVENUTO CELLINI



A rival sculptor once accused Benvenuto Cellini of being evil because he had killed several men. Cellini replied, "At any rate, the men I have killed do not shame me as much as your bad statues shame you, for the earth covers my victims, but yours are exposed to the view of the world."

Cellini believed that as an artist and a gentleman, he had the right to take the law into his own hands. He never doubted that his own opinions were correct and he never hesitated to act.

The soldier-of-fortune and the artist were mixed in Cellini. In 1527 he almost gave up goldsmithing altogether, to become captain in one of the bands of soldiers called *condottieri* that roamed all over Italy in the sixteenth century.

Almost all of the incidents in Cellini's autobiography really happened, but not always as he described them. He thought he was a hero and wrote as if he were one. But he often exaggerated the truth or left out information which he thought might damage his reputation.

Cellini was a hothead and a braggart, but his autobiography is still read because of the dash and energy with which he lived and wrote. Crit-

ics consider it to be among the best autobiographies ever written. One man described it this way: "We get from it something of the same pleasure that we feel in looking at a terrible wild beast who cannot get near enough to hurt us."

Cellini began his autobiography in 1558, when he was fifty-eight years old. He never intended it as a book, but rather as a memoir. For over a century and a half, only a single manuscript copy of it existed. The autobiography was printed for the first time in 1728.

Cellini also wrote technical works on the arts of goldsmithing and sculpture.

Very little of Cellini's work as a goldsmith survives. A cup by him is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. The golden salt-cellar he made for King Francis I of France is in a museum in Vienna, Austria. A few medallions and buttons he designed are in other museums in Europe. All his other creations have disappeared, melted down at some time or other for the value of the precious metals of which they were made.

Several pieces of Cellini's sculpture exist. The Perseus still stands in Florence where Cellini placed it. But most critics now do not think quite as much of it as he did.

Cellini lived for many years after he completed his memoir. But his life was not so carefree as it had been before. He complained constantly about his lack of money. He was growing old, and his health was bad. He felt that he was being neglected.

But his marriage in 1565 was a happy one, and he was very fond of his children.

When he died on February 13, 1571, at the age of seventy-one, he was buried with great honor in a church in Florence.

WAKING THE DEAD

"Where are you bound for, sir?" the seaman asked.

"I go," said the traveler with a smile, "I go to wake the dead."

The traveler was not a wizard or magician, but a fifteenth-century Italian merchant, Cyriac of Ancona. The dead he hoped to raise were the literature and wisdom of ancient Greece, almost forgotten in the West for over a thousand years. When Cyriac was not trading in Constantinople and Turkey, he went exploring through Greece and North Africa. He was fascinated with the ancient world, and wanted to tread the same ground that the Greek heroes of old had marched upon. Cyriac could not read ancient Greek and did not know very much about the literature, but he felt compelled to go around collecting manuscripts, coins, statuettes, medallions, anything old that he could afford.

In Italy during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, people like Cyriac of Ancona were not rare. Some Greek writings had been known in Latin translations for a long time. But the whole literature of ancient Greece appeared to learned men in Italy like a vast wonderland of untold riches, waiting only for a man who could read the magic words.

Scholars began ransacking the libraries of monasteries, looking for copies of the old, forgotten masterpieces of the dead language. The knowledge of Greek became a sign of great learning.

In 1396, the Italian city of Florence invited a scholar from Constantinople to teach Greek to the public. An overflow crowd attended his lectures. Most of the people in the audience understood not a word of what was spoken, but stayed anyway, eager to hear even the unintelligible sounds of the language spoken by Homer, Plato and Aristotle. Since Greece itself was cut off from the rest of Europe by the Turks, scholars came to Italy to study ancient Greek grammar.

Ancient Latin too was revived. Latin had never disappeared, but had changed through the course of centuries, so that the Latin used in churches was quite different from that which Virgil wrote. Now scholars went back to ancient manuscripts to learn the language spoken by the Caesars. It became fashionable for the wealthy to pay learned men to make copies of the Latin classics.

Nobles wrote to each other in Latin, imitating closely the style of the ancient Romans. On state occasions, long addresses were made in classical Latin, and it was expected that most people in the audience would understand them.

The period of roughly two hundred years, from 1350 to 1550, was known as the Renaissance, which means "rebirth" in French. During this time, people began to question the truths that had been accepted for centuries. They wanted to seek out facts for themselves instead of relying upon tradition. The invention of printing around 1440 and the discovery of paper helped to spread the new learning far and wide. Then the North and South American continents were discovered. In 1543 Copernicus published his theory that the earth revolved around the sun. It seemed as if the whole known universe had suddenly exploded.

During this time, men of tremendous talent and energy created works of painting, literature, sculpture and architecture which are considered to be among the greatest achievements of Western civilization. Some people of the age, like Cellini, led lives so full of adventure that they appear incredible, more like fiction than truth. The ideal was to be a universal man, to be possessed of all knowledge and all skill.

The search for the lost learning of Greece and Rome led men to seek for themselves explanations of what was unknown. Because of this new quest for answers, the Renaissance is considered to mark the beginning of the modern world.

MICHELANGELO

One morning while Michelangelo was at work on the "Last Judgment," a painting in the Sistine Chapel in Rome, a courtier wandered over and infuriated him by criticizing the painting. As soon as the courtier was gone, the enraged Michelangelo painted a picture of him burning in the corner of the painting which represented hell. The portrait was recognized by all who saw it, and the angry courtier complained to the pope. But the pope only laughed. "I can't interfere," he said. "I have some authority in purgatory, but where Michelangelo has put you, I can be of no help."

As a child, Michelangelo Buonarroti had always wanted to be an artist. In 1489, when he was fourteen, he was chosen to go to an art school established by Lorenzo de' Medici, who ruled the city of Florence in Italy. Soon after Michelangelo began studying there, Lorenzo saw one of his pieces, a statue of a mythological creature, half man and half goat. Lorenzo was astonished at fourteen-year-old Michelangelo's ability. But he teased the young sculptor: "Such wonderful creatures aren't always young as you have made yours. They become unsteady on their feet. Their brows grow wrinkled and they lose their teeth." He smiled and walked on.

As soon as Lorenzo had disappeared young Michelangelo attacked the statue violently with a mallet and chisel. Angrily, he carved lines into the brow and jaw and puckered the eyes with crow's feet. Finally he placed his chisel against the creature's upper jaw and struck out a tooth.

Lorenzo was so impressed with the changes in the statue that he took Michelangelo into his own home. While living with the Medici, Michelangelo worked diligently, creating many pieces which are now famous throughout the world.

Three years later, when Lorenzo died, Michelangelo left the service of the Medici and went to work in Florence for several years. In the city square in Florence, there lay a huge, shapeless mass of marble, spoiled by several sculptors who had tried to carve it into a statue, but who had failed. Michelangelo, headstrong and confident as ever, asked for permission to try his hand. His request was granted, so he set to work in a burst of enthusiasm. The result was the colossal "David," which still stands in Florence.

When Michelangelo was thirty-three he was commissioned by Pope Julius II to paint the vast, vaulted ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome. To paint the high ceiling, Michelangelo lay on his back on a platform sixty feet above the floor painting on the wet plaster above him. After four years' work he had covered the ceiling with frescoes depicting the stories of the Old Testament. Critics consider these frescoes to be among the most beautiful and powerful ever painted.

More than twenty years later Michelangelo returned to the Sistine Chapel to paint the sixty-foot-high "Last Judgment," which still contains the courtier burning in hell.

In 1564, when he was eighty-nine, Michelangelo wrote, "Death plucks me by the cloak." He died soon after and was buried in the church of Santa Croce in Florence.

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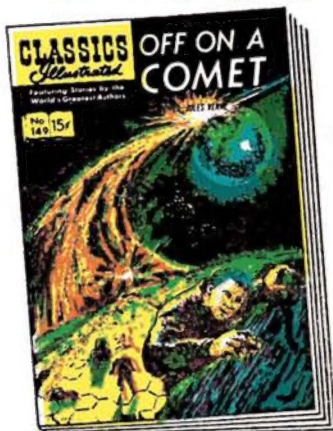
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